

Class Climate Success Story

PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



Background A private liberal arts college with 2,500 students, Pacific University processed 10,000 course evaluations a year using a rigid system of pre-printed forms and a scanner.

Similar to most colleges, each class has a unique course number. Because the questionnaires were standard for all classes, this critical course information had to be entered by the students. If the number was marked incorrectly or omitted, the accuracy and reliability of the data was compromised.

Challenge Many campus groups had a vested interest in the survey results. The course evaluations were used by the personnel committee, instructors and the administration for faculty reviews and content improvement.

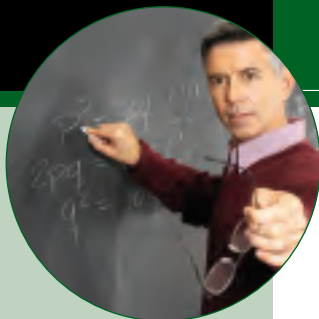
"We knew the system was flawed, but to change a key practice like course evaluations, many parties had to be consulted," says Lee Colaw, chief information officer, Pacific University.

The university conducted an eye-opening 18-month study that revealed the administrative staff spent weeks checking completed forms for errors. More than 160 hours annually were spent pre-processing questionnaires. This was time spent erasing stray marks, darkening light marks and double checking course codes, all before the forms ever passed through the scanner. Without this pre-process the staff found the results were largely inaccurate. Once the forms were scanned, the results were photocopied and distributed in hard-copy reports across campus.

"Course evaluations were time consuming, but that was the only way with our old system," Colaw said.

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Benefits

- Flexible questionnaires printed on a laser printer using standard paper or distributed online
- Provides image of the form for digital storage and retrieval
- Emails results immediately, no hard copy reports
- Processing completed in days not weeks or months
- Captures handwritten comments



Solution

Once the campus realized the existing course evaluation process was not only wasting time, but was questionably accurate, Pacific University adopted the Class Climate solution.

In fall 2005 Pacific University implemented Class Climate to handle 5,233 course evaluation questionnaires for 286 courses.

With the semester end looming, the university implemented the system immediately and even before the software training, the staff was adding surveys into Class Climate to handle course evaluations.

"What was amazing was the ease of use," says Colaw. "We found the interface to be intuitive and before our training we were up and running."

Eighty-seven percent of responses were returned and scanned within days, not weeks. The system generated results automatically and emailed reports to instructors, the personnel committee and deans immediately.

"I became a supporter of Class Climate based on the quality of the system," Connie Taylor, executive assistant to the dean of arts and sciences, Pacific University. "The old system was supposed to be automated, but with all the preparation we did with the physical forms before scanning, it was more of a manual process. This has been a complete revolution from the way that we were processing before. Plus, the support from Scantron has been phenomenal."

With Scantron's system, the university has flexibility with the forms because they are created in the system and printed using a standard laser printer. Now, they control accuracy by including course numbers directly on the forms before distribution. And the questions can be changed or updated easily.

Results

The questionnaires are generated electronically and printed on demand. Processing time from when the forms are received to when the results are reported is nearly immediate.

"Compared to the weeks that it took before we would even begin scanning the forms, this is a complete revolution," says Taylor.

The IT department is praised for the system, the administrative staff is efficiently processing the evaluations and the campus is confident with the data accuracy.

"The faculty care about accuracy," says Colaw. "With this system, they can double check the numbers and find they are correct. Now they endorse the process."

The system allows Pacific University to handle high-volume course evaluations and can be expanded to other departments as needs grow. Currently, half the university uses Class Climate and expansion to other departments is planned.

"Now that we are using Class Climate, all our problems just vanished. The course evaluation process is streamlined, flexible and accurate."

Lee M. Colaw, Chief Information Officer, *Pacific University*

Are you wondering how Scantron's Class Climate can help your organization?

For more information, please visit
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